



## Thyatira: The Immoral Church Small Group Questions

Overview: The Trouble with Tolerance In recent years debates have flared up over the limits of free speech. Should anyone be given a platform, no matter his views? Can someone attempt to silence a person whom she finds dangerous or threatening? Some observers condemn the students for their intellectual intolerance, while others argue that reprehensible ideas should not be tolerated. Are there limits to tolerance? The Bible's answer is yes. When it comes to the church, some practices should not be tolerated. The same is true for doctrine. False teaching should not be tolerated but must be rooted out. The church in Thyatira had permitted a false teacher who claimed to possess the gift of prophecy to mislead others. This had opened the door to both sinful practices and false teaching. Jesus nicknamed this false teacher "Jezebel," after the wicked queen who killed the true prophets of Israel and enticed God's people to worship Baal (v. 20; see 1 Kings 19). The nature of Jezebel's teaching was what Jesus had condemned in Pergamum. She claimed to reveal secret truth, enticing her followers to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. God had "tolerated" her ministry for a time, but only in order to give her a chance to repent (21). Now the time for patience was over. Jesus promised to "cast her on a bed of suffering" and "strike her children dead" (vv. 22-23). To a culture that values tolerance, this response seems harsh. But Jesus understood the destructive nature of her teaching and the vulnerability of this church. The cultural environment in Thyatira was so toxic that the only command Jesus gave to those who had not yet succumbed to Jezebel's false teaching was to "hold on" until His return (v. 25).

1. Read Rev 2:18-29
2. What are the things that we learn about Jesus?
3. What are the things that this church was getting right?
4. What is it that Jesus has against this church?
5. What may be some reasons why the church tolerated Jezebel and her ungodly and misleading teachings; why reluctant to confront wrongs? How about us today as church leaders, fellow believers or parents--are we guilty at times of the same thing? Why?
6. In v.21 it sounds like Jesus was tolerant also. Why was Jesus "tolerant" or patient? What can we learn from this as to how we should practice tolerance in the church or at home?
7. Jesus Christ is so good, patient and longsuffering. He gives us opportunity to repent. What is true repentance and some evidences that it is genuine? After some discussion consider 2 Chr.7:14; Acts 19:18-20; Luke 22:60-62.
8. Summary statement on verses 25-28: For the faithful there will be a reward. The reward promised by Jesus seems to pertain to the victorious believers having a significant role in the millennial kingdom. This seems to be confirmed in 2 Tim.2:11-12a; Rev.5:10; Rev.20:6. 8. Some or many at Thyatira had not fallen prey to Jezebel's false and misleading teachings. Jesus had just one word for them: "Hold on to what you have" (verse 25). What do you do to help you stay on course spiritually? What are some challenges you/we face as we seek to stay on course in an increasingly pagan society when the pressure is on to digress from God's clear word?